

A Year on the Frontline: Dispatches from New FE Teachers

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Abstract

This paper explores the experiences of new FE teachers during their first year of teaching in the post compulsory sector. The focus is on initial perceptions of the role, which are typically grounded in visions of 'making a difference to students' lives', compared with the reality of working in an environment driven by measurement, targets and the financial imperative. A number of participants in the study describe difficulties in obtaining resources and managing student behaviour, as well as a general lack of support, and liken this to working on the frontline without having the necessary armoury to combat the challenges they face. However, despite this somewhat negative portrayal of life in the sector, there is an overwhelmingly positive response to the rewards of working with such a diverse group of learners.

Background

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the first year of teaching within the post compulsory sector (PCE) presents numerous challenges. For many, these challenges seem insurmountable and result in practitioners leaving courses of study, the sector, or the profession itself (Chambers and Roper 2000). Statistics from teacher education show that approximately 8%¹ of trainees leave ITE courses and the profession within the first seven weeks of the course. Often cited reasons are pressures of workload and lack of support.

Other literature has begun to explore the experiences of pre-service trainee teachers on full time ITE programmes and outlines some of the issues teachers encounter in carrying out their teaching placements (Wallace 2002). Reference has also been made to a 'vicious spiral' that can occur when new staff endure poor work place conditions, a lack of resources and a perceived lack of support, highlighting the 'disjuncture between official rhetoric about lifelong learning and the experience of those working and studying in English Further Education' (Avis and Bathmaker 2005:61). Although a number of the problems associated with entering the PCE teaching profession have been documented (Avis and Bathmaker 2005, 2006, 2007, Spenceley 2007, Kidd 2010), what is less clear is how the new teachers who survived their first year in practice managed to do so. This paper seeks to explore the lived experiences of new teachers, their perceptions of

teaching in the sector and the specific strategies they employed in order to overcome the challenges they were presented with in their first year of practice.

During the last 30 years, the English FE sector has undergone a series of changes which have had a significant influence on its purpose and the way it is managed. Originally a somewhat ignored 'mittelkind' between compulsory and higher education, the Cinderella of the English education system (Baker 1989) suffered from a lack of attention in the form of limited funding and strategic direction, a situation which has been described as 'benign neglect' (McGinty and Fish 1993).

It could be argued that the experiences of the sector are the result of a misunderstanding about its purpose which has changed according to the direction of the prevailing political wind. However, for many years there has been a distinct connection between the role of FE and the needs of employers. This was made very clear by James Callaghan in 1976 in the famous 'Ruskin Speech' which stressed the need for co-operation between education sectors and industry. New Labour reinforced the requirement for the 'vocationalisation' of education when it pushed PCE to the centre of government rhetoric by announcing that: 'Education is the best economic policy we have' (The Learning Age 1998: introduction). The sector now had a clear focus; the remit of enhancing the skills of the nation, further strengthened by the assertion that the UK workforce was being left behind because of a lack of basic and vocational skills (Leitch 2006).

Historical developments such as Incorporation in 1993² meant that the sector itself underwent a dramatic transformation, resulting in a change in culture, ethos and management. From organisations originally driven by public sector values, FE colleges developed a commercial focus and were managed accordingly. This change of focus increased competition between organisations and reinforced the need for efficiency measures, including the introduction of performance management and data driven targets. One significant

¹ Figures based on statistics collect by the University of Bedfordshire 2009-11

² The Incorporation of colleges refers to the FE-HE Act 1992, which released FE institutions from the control of local authorities and gave them responsibilities of self-regulation and independence.

outcome of these changes was the increased surveillance of teachers' performance, alongside an intensification of workload, illustrated by Ball as some of the 'terrors of performativity' (Ball 2003). Prior to incorporation, teaching staff had a large degree of autonomy and were given significant freedom in the way they organised their working lives. These changes were perceived by many as a shift towards the 'delivery' of courses to pre-set targets via clearly defined methodology, as opposed to pedagogic practice which allowed a more holistic approach. According to Avis, the changes created 'trusted servants rather than... empowered professionals' (Avis 2003:239) and made it more difficult for new teachers to develop their own understanding of their roles. However, it should be considered that running alongside the desire to monitor and control teacher activity, many of the strategies employed were set against a genuine interest to improve teaching and learning and were the beginning of an 'ongoing transformation of what it means to be a college Lecturer' (Avis 1999:260).

Another significant outcome of the Incorporation of Colleges was seen in the increase in part-time and casualised employment within the sector (Gleeson 2001), which had a fundamental impact on the types of contracts being issued to new teachers. Many new staff referred to a 'rites of passage' into FE which involved undertaking significant part-time work before securing full-time employment (Avis and Bathmaker 2006).

The diversity of post compulsory education in England could be described as one of the sector's merits. Conversely, such diversity creates a unique and challenging environment for new staff to the sector, particularly in relation to the development of a work ethos and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). Traditionally, FE teachers assume teaching roles as a second career and bring with them the ethos and practice from their previous vocations. Colley's reference to 'vocational habitus' highlights the ways in which this previous experience influences approaches to work providing a 'certain combination of dispersions demanded by the vocational culture' (Colley et al 2003: 488). The prior work experience and involvement in an alternative professional culture also generates a series of expectations when embarking on a new role which is often followed by disenchantment when met by the reality of the experience. It has been argued that the development of a single community of practice would not be possible in this environment (Lucas 2004, Bathmaker and Avis 2005, cited in Nasta 2007).

Avis and Bathmaker's (2006) study of new teachers' initial experiences in FE included accounts of

comparisons between previous experiences either in industry or as students. These comparisons, often highly critical, included what was perceived by the participants as a 'lack of professionalism' among teachers, as well as 'inadequate management practice'. There were also examples of trainees distancing themselves from the current communities of practice within their workplace settings and highlighting negative perceptions of existing teachers who they saw as 'only interested in going in, getting the grades at the end of the year, meeting targets....' Also citing criticisms of the inability to change, 'A lot of existing staff are stuck with the dinosaurs' (Bathmaker and Avis 2010:56). Reference is also made to demoralised professionals, and clear dichotomies between the focus of managers (seen as audit and paperwork) being at odds with classroom pedagogy. This is clearly highlighted by Randle and Brady (1997) when considering the conflicting paradigms between teachers and managers in FE (Appendix 1). Some accounts also highlight a limited sense of collegiality among the academic workforce, which was seen as accepting of managerial relations and control (Avis et al 2003). This was further reinforced by a trend for individual teachers to work in isolation, rather than in teams, with limited support from colleagues. In contrast, in non-mainstream FE settings, trainees reported a much more positive experience (Spenceley 2007).

For many new practitioners, expectations of working in FE were focussed on the opportunity to work with individuals who had not done well at school. The sector was viewed as a 'second chance' ... 'where some form of magic which had proved elusive in schools might transform students' experience' (Avis and Bathmaker 2007:524). Instead, what they found were students who did not attend classes regularly, were passive, somewhat resistant towards learning and seemed to be carrying with them the disposition towards education that they had previously formed. Similar findings appeared in the diary accounts of pre-service trainees on teaching placement (Wallace 2002) who found themselves assuming a 'Schooling identity' in a form of teaching with a focus on managing behaviour and motivating students. For a number of the trainees, this discovery was in complete contrast to their expectations of the role, which they described as:

- 'Identifying learners' needs'
- 'Enabling students to learn'
- 'Encouraging (them) to reach their potential' (Avis and Bathmaker 2001:3).

Inevitably, the mismatch between expectation and reality proved difficult, as is shown in the following quote:

'I don't enjoy it at all. I don't feel there is any reason for me to be there, they'd be just as happy with an empty room and someone to sign their EMA' (Avis and Bathmaker 2007:514).

For a number of new teachers, the disappointment with regard to the attitude, behaviour and objectives of the FE students they encountered (Wallace 2002) is matched by their perception of an oppressive culture of mistrust and management control (Kidd 2010), as opposed to the expected focus on pedagogy and supporting individual students. New entrants to the profession often express surprise at the focus on finance and the need to keep the 'customer' happy (Spenceley 2007).

The economic imperative (Hyland and Merrill 2003) is strong and is reinforced by the reporting mechanism used within FE by the Skills Funding Agency (SfA) as well as the requirements of OFSTED which ensures that students registered as attending after the census date³ are often viewed as 'untouchable'. This results in the development of a culture of entertaining and retaining students who are less than motivated to achieve and highlights the dichotomy between upholding standards and ensuring that students are kept (and pass) at all costs. A situation which is augmented further by the requirement for courses to be benchmarked against nationally imposed levels for retention and success rates with courses (and colleges) falling below these targets being subject to criticism and potential closure.

This instrumental approach to results is manifested in the rise of managerialism in the sector (Randle and Brady 1997), whereby, through a series of targets and Key Performance Indicators, the responsibility for the achievement of retention and success rates is frequently devolved to teaching teams and individual teachers. As new teachers often have a desire to conform and be looked upon favourably, it is not difficult to see how a 'compliance culture' develops (Silverman 2008). In real terms, the result of this is a practical approach to the job which is far removed from the initial espoused values of those transferring to the profession. New teachers' wide-eyed enthusiasm and initial naivety, typified by the desire to 'make a contribution to society and have an impact on others' (Garner and Harper 2003:46, in Maxwell 1999) often fails to survive such fundamental changes to their perception of the role and to

counteract these findings, faith can be placed in forms of 'strategic compliance':

'Innovative strategies for dealing with the pressures of income generation, flexibilisation and work intensification while at the same time, continuing their commitments to educational or other professional values of student care, support and collegiality.' (Shain and Gleeson 1999:24).

This disconnection between the initial eagerness of new entrants to the profession and the slow slide into a compliance-based cynicism becomes all pervading in a short space of time if left unchecked. Nasta (2007) noted that the trainees (who would tend to be new entrants to the profession) extended this instrumental approach to their teacher training, often viewing the training as something necessary to certify their ability to practice, as opposed to an opportunity to develop skills. Further research, whilst stressing that 82% of respondents found their ITT to be 'very helpful' or 'helpful', were unspecific when asked to review the relevance of particular aspects of the course. Some respondents commented that they 'had forgotten most of it' or 'can't really remember much about it' (Harkin, Clow, Hillier 2003:21).

This picture of the realities for many new teachers within FE seems to be tempered by the experience of a minority. The fact that some teachers recognised the weaknesses in the system can be viewed in a positive light. Avis and Bathmaker (2009) reported that the new teachers interviewed were all concerned about the wellbeing and future success of their students and this was reinforced by the work of Maxwell (2009), who found that new teachers displayed a general trend towards a teaching style that encompasses the learner at the heart of the process. Whilst that would find favour with the BIS (2011) description of the future of the sector, it must be stated that so far, this vision of optimism seemed to be the exception rather than the rule.

This paper examines the initial expectations and subsequent experiences, within the post compulsory education sector, of a group of ten new teachers. The group consists of four males and six females aged between 23 and 56. All but Teacher D are currently employed within the sector (Teacher D's reasons for leaving employment will be explored later). Each respondent was invited to reflect on his or her first year in teaching via a semi-structured interview. A qualitative approach to the research was used to ensure that the full spectrum of experiences could be encompassed without being constrained by the framework endemic to the quantitative paradigm (Jarratt 1996). It also ensured that the interviewee would be able to 'tell the story' of

³ The census date is 42 days after the commencement of the course. Before this date students are not officially on the course and hence can be moved away from the course without any subsequent impact on success or retention figures.

their first year rather than merely answer the questions set, hence, their expectations and perceptions would come from their own analysis of the situation rather than running the risk of having an outsider's pre-conceived ideas being present in the design of the questions. The ten chosen teachers represent a mixture of academic, vocational and professional subjects and are employed in both mainstream further education as well as satellite institution provision; this reflects the innate diversity of the sector (Smithers and Robinson 2000).

All teachers interviewed were undertaking ITE qualifications in the East Midlands and all bar Teacher C and Teacher E had been employed within the industrial or commercial sector for at least five years prior to entry into the further education sector. This mirrors the widely held perception of the sector, articulated by James and Biesta (2007:127) that 'many (teachers) never envisaged professional careers, let alone teaching, and some slipped into the role through a range of unforeseen and unplanned events'.

The experiences of Teacher F typified the sample's introduction to the further education sector:

'Where I was working beforehand I took a major pay cut because they had started mucking people about and a colleague suggested I applied for this job because he thought it might suit me.'

Participants were asked to reflect on their initial expectations and then compare this with their current perceptions of the job and the sector as they come close to completing the first year of employment. Further questions investigated the structures in place for the support of new teachers, the main challenges faced and the advice they would pass on to new teachers for the future. A full set of questions is available in Appendix 2. In keeping with good practice (Hair et al 2011) all teachers were also offered the opportunity to talk about any other issue that they felt was pertinent in their first year of teaching.

All data was collected in March and April 2012 and the anonymity of participants has been protected.

Findings

The importance of support for new teachers, identified by Spenceley (2007), is illustrated when analysing the responses given by contributors. Many new teachers made reference to the support offered by colleagues as being invaluable in surviving their initial introduction to the sector. Teacher J's answer when asked about key sources of support was typical:

'Definitely other staff in the department, they are really supportive.' This response was echoed by Teacher B: 'We are a good team where we help each other... we have a very good base really.'

This positive experience links closely to the concept of Communities of Practice (Wenger 1999) and the fostering of this culture within further education can be identified as good practice in a number of colleges. In many of the organisations surveyed, this starts with the teacher's experience of initial teacher training. Teacher G gave the most enthusiastic endorsement of this route: '[my] PGCE teacher is my "go to guy"... he is my hero!' Others saw initial teacher training as an opportunity to discuss concerns with peers and praised the structured support that was available, as Teacher I states:

'My Cert Ed teacher was always there on hand if I thought I couldn't cope and had time for a quick chat to put me back on track, as did my mentor – without both of them I wouldn't have got through the first term and wouldn't be sat here.'

The Community of Practice approach was taken up by other participants who mentioned the culture of support fostered by mentors, by heads of department and also by 'buddies' who are appointed to guide teachers through the first year. What comes through in the responses is the importance teachers placed on having a network of support which sometimes extended beyond the confines of the formal structures, as in the case of Teacher F, a former engineer:

'[My support network consists of] peers and to a very strong extent some of my former work colleagues who phone up every so often to make sure my feet are very firmly on the ground and that I don't suddenly think that I am now an academic who doesn't have to get himself covered in oil.'

These positive experiences were not universal however, indeed a minority of teachers were highly critical of the support received. The experience of Teacher D will be explored in more detail later but, whilst their experience was an extreme example, it is clear that the support offered to new teachers was not consistent among all participants. Teacher A typified the first year of a number of teachers: 'whilst (other teachers) supported my teaching, my experience was that in terms of resources and materials there wasn't much support.' Others felt that colleagues had been less than supportive, as highlighted by Teacher G's comments when discussing expectations of the role:

'...[which included] the fear that they'll walk all over you because you're new – they can smell newbies!'

But it wasn't the students I should have worried about... it was my colleagues. I had to prove my worth and that's OK, I can understand their feelings but it was a surprise that staff don't like to share resources.'

Other teachers referred to a perceived lack of co-operation and expressed surprise at this, as Teacher A describes: 'I expected there would be a team effort and more collaboration, more team meetings.'

Many participants recognised that what was perceived as a lack of support was related to the pressures that had been placed upon the organisation by the current funding regulations (SfA 2012), emphasising the importance attached to success and retention rates. This was highlighted by Teacher B:

'At the end of the day it is all about the money, irrespective of what the teachers say. It is all money oriented. It is not there for the well being of the teachers. We are put under so much pressure, not being given the time.'

It seemed that the message in relation to the financial importance of students was made abundantly clear, indeed in one college the mantra 'pass the class' was inculcated into new members of staff which described an ethos of passing all students who were enrolled and attending classes. Another associated side effect of the financial focus was the lack of basic resources for teaching, described by Teacher A: 'What does worry me is the lack of procedure, administration and resources to do the job. The tools you need.'

The gap between new teachers' initial perceptions of the sector and the reality of the experience that was identified by Avis and Bathmaker (2006) is clear when analysing the responses given in this research. The initial conviction, typified by Teacher I, reflected the feelings of many new entrants:

'I thought I could make a difference to students' lives, I thought the majority of the students who enrolled on courses at an FE college wanted to be there.'

Such initial perceptions, often extrapolated by references to the teachers' own experiences as students generated certain expectations about 'typical' FE students (Gregory 1972) Teacher B, an experienced engineer who moved into the teaching profession to pass on knowledge, typifies this vision:

'I thought the level of students was going to be similar to what I was when I went to college and I

thought they would be pretty well behaved, perhaps some high jinks perhaps.'

This assessment was mirrored by the youngest person interviewed, Teacher C, who came to the sector shortly after graduating from University: 'I thought they would see my subject as important.'

This rather hopeful approach to the role was in some ways refreshing, but given the subsequent experiences described by this research, it also highlighted a number of concerns, in particular illustrating a potential weakness within the recruitment policies followed by colleges, a point highlighted by Alan Tuckett and Pauline Waterhouse's submissions on the subject to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee in 2005.

Not all new entrants had the idealistic visions expressed above; other responses ranged from Teacher G's well expressed fear – 'They'll walk all over you because you're new' – to the commonly held viewpoint detailed by Teacher D: 'I knew it was going to be different' – although the gap between the initial perception and the realities identified by Avis and Bathmaker (2007) is evident in many of the interviews carried out. Teacher H neatly summarises the experience in a terse admission: 'I probably didn't think it would be as difficult as it actually was.' This was echoed by Teacher B: 'You would never be able to do the teaching in the way you are supposed to in the time given. Not a cat in hell's chance.'

It is quite apparent that the degree of support a new teacher receives impacts on their initial experiences (Spenceley 2007). Teachers who reported strong support within their department often found that the reality matched, or even exceeded their initial expectations. Teacher G, who felt well supported, articulates this clearly: 'Without wishing to sound glib, this job is a lot easier than a lot of people think it is.' This clear link between support and experience is most evident in the narrative presented by Teacher D, whose experience illustrated the consequences of a lack of support within the organisation.

'Sometimes I felt as though I was being undermined if anything. There was one individual in particular that kind of looked across and if I wasn't working at what they were doing they would ask what I was doing.'

He then goes on to detail his early experiences at a college of further education that appeared to be more akin to the events experienced by Katniss Everdeen in

The Hunger Games⁴ (Collins 2008) than a new teacher looking to help their students:

'Just to keep my head above water I was working 16-17 hours a day, I was leaving home at 6.30am, working before starting teaching and from a personal perspective I was teaching from 9 in the morning till 3.30, without a break. I was having my lunch at 3.45, going home at 5, having a quick bite to eat and then working till 11 at night. I was trying to give the students something good to do but you know what? All they wanted to know was what they had to do for the assignment.'

Teacher D left the profession after three months in the sector.

A further recurring theme that emerges from the interviews was the perception that organisational structures and consequent objectives that are prevalent within the sector fail to support the needs of new teachers. Despite the move to Incorporation, introduced to encourage the sector to espouse private sector values, the optimistic view expressed by Huddleston and Unwin (2007:12) ('It is fair to say that the vast majority of colleges managed incorporation without resorting to bad practice') is not reflected in participants' recollections. Teacher A's comments are typical:

'In commerce, and I worked for some Blue Chips, what happens is that everything is structured, everything is organised, yeah, if you have specifically developed something, even the structural supports are there for you. Even the feedback is there, no one would be expected to go into their office and somehow develop a remortgage to 60+ year olds. Here you are expected to come in and within a week of being given the role you are asked 'can you develop this curriculum into a course' with all the resources and achieve all the rates. It has taken me some time to develop the curriculum to the point that I am hitting most of the marks. You learn by experience.'

This bewilderment at the lack of formal structures was mirrored by Teacher I whose comments related to the formal induction:

'Having worked in offices and various other places of work, I also did a couple of weeks at [a private training organisation] last year and I was shown the building and introduced to people – here I didn't have any induction, I wasn't shown even how to

work the photocopier... I think my very first day it was like "there's your class – off you go."

Many other teachers in the study expressed similar concerns and likened their experiences to being 'in the firing line' or 'sent into battle' without the resources to protect themselves. It is interesting to contrast these views with the public vision that is presented by colleges within the sector. College A is typical in that it entices new teachers with the view that they aim to 'Shape a highly motivated and skilled workforce', yet the response of a teacher working there reflected a rather different reality: 'I have never worked in such a badly organised company in all my life.'

It is clear that it is not necessarily the people within these structures that are the focus of their ire – indeed, many participants comment favourably upon the support they received – but instead it is the lack of organisational structures that cause problems. This is exacerbated by the organisational objectives that stress the importance of adhering to the current funding objectives used within the sector. The 2010 report by the Department for Education articulated these goals: 'The Department expects competitive pressures to drive behaviour that generates value for money' (DfE 2011:29). Interviews with participants indicate that these competitive pressures are being interpreted as a necessity to continually raise success rates. This factor, allied with the lack of formal structures, mean that the cynicism identified earlier is present amongst teachers. This feeling is best articulated by Teacher B:

'From what I have seen it is all about money, money, money. We are told whatever happens they must pass, it is get them in, whatever you do you must get them through this qualification whether they are any good or not and that is really difficult.'

It is, however, important to balance these experiences with the enthusiasm that a large majority of the teachers interviewed expressed when asked about the highlights of their first year. These highlights generally revolved around the students, as expressed by Teacher G: 'the moment my students said "I can do this", at that moment I knew I can do this'. At these moments, all of the problems with support, structures and colleagues seem to pale into insignificance. There were also many reflections from teachers about the comparisons of teaching to their former job. Teacher F struck an optimistic note: 'My wife and children will tell you that I go home in a better mood now than I did.... I've got less stress doing this than what I had prior to doing this.' Although these positive viewpoints were not shared by every participant in the study, they were shared by a significant number, and perhaps an optimistic final word

⁴ A novel based in a post-apocalyptic world depicting an annual event in which boys and girls are selected to compete in a gladiatorial battle until only one person is left. Katniss Everdeen is the heroine.

should be given to Teacher A. 'I got my half a dozen emails at the end of term that said *you're a great teacher*. This informal recognition by the students was viewed as appreciation from the most important group of people by this teacher.

Final Thoughts

Twenty years after the Incorporation of Colleges, the promise of revolution based on the adoption of business-like approaches does not seem to have addressed some of the fundamental issues within post compulsory education, which, it seems, remains the impoverished Cinderella of the English education system. Perhaps the changes that have taken place are more akin to a different story, that of Little Red Riding Hood, who, influenced by the lure of Grandmother's cottage, was not quite prepared for what was awaiting her on the inside. Such fables often contain within them a serious message and in this case it is clear that, despite the problems faced by new recruits on the frontline, it is possible to navigate an acceptable path through the forest of teaching bureaucracy, as well as battling with the constant demands to motivate students and meet targets, provided there is some support along the way. Unfortunately, this study has shown that without support, there are likely to be casualties, but it has also highlighted that adversity can be overcome when the rewards are prized and reflect the original values of those entering the sector. This is most apparent in the comment made by Teacher A, who despite recounting a number of difficulties, commented: 'if offered my old job back with an increased salary, I would stay here.'

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Appendix 1 - Conflicting Paradigms

Professional Paradigm	Managerial Paradigm
Goals and Values Primacy of student learning and the teaching process. Loyalty to students and colleagues. Concern for academic standards.	Goals and Values Primacy of student through-put and income generation. Loyalty to the organisation. Concern to achieve an acceptable balance between efficiency and effectiveness.
Key Assumptions Teachers as funds of expertise. Resources deployed on the basis of educational need. Quality of provision assessed on the basis of input.	Key Assumptions Teachers as flexible facilitators and assessors. Resources deployed on the basis of market demand and value for tax payers' money. Quality assessed on the basis of output outcomes.
Management Ethos Collegiality/community of practice. Professional autonomy/the trust principle/accountability to peers/tacit knowledge. Pluralism*.	Management Ethos Control by managers and the market. Management of performance indicators and surveillance. Unitarism**

(Randle and Brady 1997:232)

Appendix 2 - Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

Demographics

Age Range- 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60

Gender

Subject Specialism

Vocational experience

Highest Qualification

Workplace (main site, satellite)

What were your initial expectations of teaching within the FE sector?

What have been the highlights of your first year of teaching within the FE sector?

What have been the key sources of support in relation to carrying out your teaching role?

What have been the main challenges in your first year of teaching within the FE sector?

Based on your current experience, what sources of support would be useful for new teachers in the FE sector?

If you were advising someone who was thinking of teaching in the sector, what advice would you give?

Has your initial teacher training course prepared you for your role? If yes – how?

What strategies have you used to ensure that you can meet the demands of the job?

To what extent has your experience in your first year of teaching matched your initial expectations (expand)?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?